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RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 2717
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RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 001166

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [PTER](#) [PE](#)
SUBJECT: SENDERO ARREST: GOP AND ANAYLSTS ACCOUNTS DIFFER

REF: LIMA 1094

Classified By: Amb. P. Michael McKinley for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary. Peruvian National Police (PNP) and the Interior Ministry's intelligence unit on August 9 captured Felix Victoriano Mejia Ascencio ("Mono"), who the GOP claims is a high-ranking leader in the Upper Huallaga Valley (UHV) faction of Sendero Luminoso. According to law enforcement contacts, Mejia was considered leader "Artemio's" number four, and in charge of Artemio's security detail for part of the region. Several outside analysts say Mejia's arrest is less significant. End summary.

12. (C) Peruvian National Police (PNP) and the Interior Ministry's intelligence unit on August 9 captured Felix Victoriano Mejia Ascencio ("Mono"), who security officials claim is a high-ranking leader in the UAV faction of Sendero Luminoso. The PNP's special investigative unit, which works closely with the Embassy, assisted with Mejia's arrest in a bar near the town of Aucayacu. About three weeks earlier, PNP had attacked UHV SL leader "Artemio's" camp, as a part of a stepped-up counter-terrorism effort (reftel). Since March, PNP has captured two or three low-ranking senderistas, including the August 6 PNP arrest of "Arly," which also received some media coverage.

13. (C) According to law enforcement officials, Mejia is in UHV leader Artemio's "inner circle," and considered his number four operative, in charge of security for part of the region. Mejia allegedly participated in several recent ambushes, and had had an arrest warrant for terrorism charges pending since November 2008. One of Mejia's brothers (Percy Mejia Ascencio) is incarcerated for terrorism, and another (Edgar Nicanor Mejia Ascencio - "Izula") is also thought to be in Artemio's inner circle.

14. (C) Both a prominent SL analyst and the chief of security for USAID's main alternative development contractor in the UHV argued that Mono's capture is less significant, and said their sources contradict police accounts. The security contractor said the captured terrorist actually worked for Artemio's logistics unit and was merely in charge of extorting payments from local businesses. Both the analyst and the security contractor said that Mono's brother Izula is actually Artemio's number four, and downplayed Mono's importance in the organization.

Comment: PNP Exaggerating Success?

¶5. (C) While each arrest is important in the GOP's struggle against SL, it appears Mejia's capture is not the lethal blow the GOP originally portrayed it to be.

MCKINLEY